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ERIKA JORDAN LOVES LOVE

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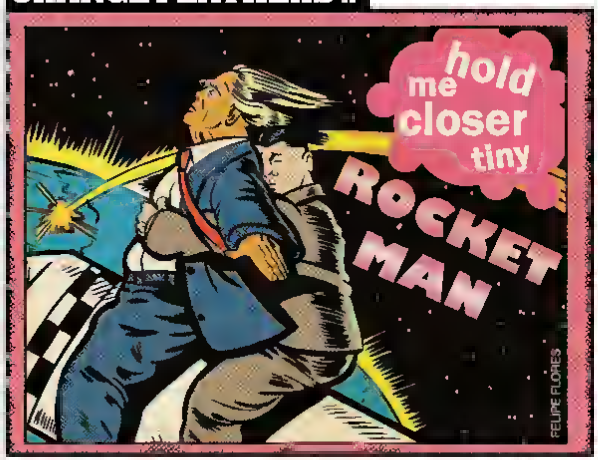

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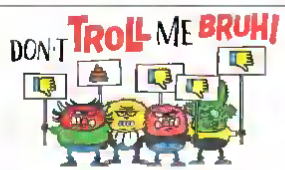

"Johnny Law? What are you 150 years old?"
—Grant, commenting on Matt Coker's "DUI Checkpoints Roll in Santa Ana Tonight and Irvine Saturday Night," posted Jan. 25.

We respond No, but like Sarah Palin with Russia, I can see it from here.

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Is Kamala Harris Your New Best Friend?

Progressive Democratic presidential contender's California law-enforcement record raises questions

If a powerful state government official saw flagrant law-enforcement corruption, remained silent and did nothing for years, what would you think if that person ran for the presidency of the United States with a campaign slogan of "Speaking Truth, Demanding Justice"?

What if that same White House candidate labeled herself "a fearless advocate" and a "determined fighter"?

And what if, in a sly attempt to mold her character weakness into a strength for unwitting voters, this onetime state attorney general also pledged "to fix our broken criminal-justice system" if she becomes leader of the free world?

moxley CONFIDENTIAL

»R. SCOTT MOXLEY

That's not a fictional, warped character. That's real-life Kamala Harris, California's junior U.S. senator who formally announced her presidential aims last month in Oakland. Pundits quickly crowned Harris a frontrunner in an ever-expanding field of Democrats seeking that party's 2020 nomination.

But trying to switch an ugly past with a glossy, blemish-free reincarnation isn't necessarily easy in a national campaign if—and this is a big *if*—political reporters at large, mainstream news outlets study Harris' past and grill her on it. Her most recent hurdle came from *The New York Times*, which published a lengthy profile ("'Progressive Prosecutor' Can Kamala Harris Square the Circle?") on Feb. 11.

In that story, Harris admitted that as California Attorney General, she'd been briefed on systemic law-enforcement cheating in what is nationally known as the Orange County jailhouse-informant scandal. With a wink-wink from local prosecutors, deputies inside the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) ran unconstitutional scams against pretrial inmates, hid or destroyed exculpatory evidence, and repeatedly committed perjury to cover up their messes.

In just a few years, the scandal upended at least 20 felony cases, including murders. The California Court of Appeal railed against the law-enforcement corruption in a historic November 2016 ruling, when Harris was still AG. The justices called the cheating's threat to the criminal-justice system "grave" and blasted officials for tolerating lousy ethics.

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE [illegible]

OFFICIAL PHOTO

The situation wasn't a mystery to Harris. "I knew misconduct had occurred," she told Kate Zernike, a reporter at the *Times*. "Clearly it had."

But none of the fudged cheaters were held accountable. Then-Sheriff Sandra Hutchens and then-District Attorney Tony Rackauckas, whose office used the OCSD seams to win trials, pretended no misconduct had occurred. When it came time for Harris to act, she also did nothing.

Well, that's not entirely accurate. She announced the launch of an investigation in early 2015 and pretended she was a watchdog the public could trust. That alleged probe, which is now four years old, withered in bureaucratic la-la land while offending deputies and prosecutors felt relief as statutes of limitations expired.

Zernike quoted Erwin Chemerinsky, the dean of UC Irvine's law school during the height of the scandal, as calling Harris' inaction "outrageous." He also relayed an important tidbit. "Twice, Kamala Harris called on my cell and said she was on top of [the cheating] and was looking into it," Chemerinsky told Zernike. "To my knowledge, the California AG never did anything with regard to the scandal."

As I've reported for three years, the probe was a sham from the outset. We now have unassailable proof from a most unlikely source—Harris. She explained to Zernike she philosophically believes an AG should ignore dirty law-enforcement officials, a notion she wisely kept secret during prior campaigns.

Imagine you've been wrongly arrested or convicted by such scoundrels, and the state's top prosecutor is uninterested. Imagine the signal that AG sends to crooked cops. Imagine being told the best you, as such a victim, can hope for is a future election that might topple a tainted agency's boss.

Harris is at peace with that notion of justice. Protecting the criminal-justice system from government abuses is "up to the voters," Harris told the *Times*, "not the attorney general."

Will the presidential-primary electorate buy her reasoning?

RSCOTTMOXLEY@OCWEEKLY.COM

Linda Sawyer, RIP

About a week ago, I sat in a Huntington Beach restaurant booth with Linda Sawyer, an Emmy Award-winning investigative journalist, without knowing my 57-year-old friend had days to live.

We'd met to discuss her murder-case projects around the nation—for some of which she wanted my assistance—and this onetime producer and writer for the likes of HBO, PBS, CBS and *Dr. Phil* told me about her upcoming outpatient surgery.

Everyone who knew Sawyer appreciated her sense of humor, loyalty and toughness. As the iHeartRadio producer of 2018's *Sleuth*, she explored what she believed were the mysteries surrounding one of Southern California's most bizarre double murders, *People v. Daniel Wozniak*. The podcast earned 2.5 million listeners nationwide.

After informing me of her upcoming surgery, Sawyer reached across the table, grabbed my hand gently, told me she worried something would go wrong at the hospital and thanked me for my friendship.

Tears formed in her eyes as she spoke about the most important part of her life, the daughters she cherished.

The situation startled me. She outwardly looked great and voiced so many plans. (Hell, she pushed me to be more aggressive in my own projects!) Her forte had been reporting stories she felt would be lost in the criminal-justice system without reporters digging.

I assured her she'd be okay. She tilted her head to the right and smiled. After moments of silence, she handed me a gold key to a box she said contained important investigatory documents, in case she wouldn't be able to retrieve them.

"What?" I asked.

She replied, "Just take it."

The next day I received a message. "I want you to know I truly love you [as a friend]," Sawyer wrote. "In such a short time, you have become so very dear to me. I don't even know if you realize how much you mean to me."

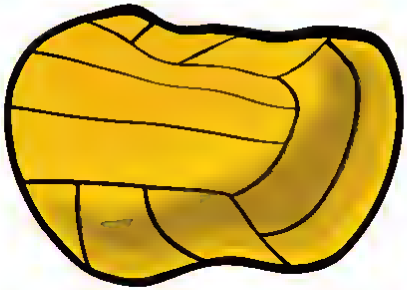
Early on Feb. 10, Sawyer passed away in a Santa Monica hospital.

—R. SCOTT MOXLEY

SAWYER (CENTER) WITH DAUGHTERS

Penalty Shots

» MATT COKER



A lawsuit against the Anaheim Union High School District (AUHSD) has been amended to allege John F. Kennedy High School administrators concealed from parents and law enforcement the sexual abuse, molestation and harassment a former water polo coach now behind bars inflicted on two student athletes.

Morgan Stewart—whose Irvine law firm Manly, Stewart & Finaldi has gained national fame for child sexual-abuse cases against the Roman Catholic church, school districts, universities and sports-governing bodies—recently announced the filing. Named as defendants are AUHSD, Kennedy High Principal Russell Earnest, athletic director David Jankowski, co-athletic director Dean Wang, former water polo coach Eric Pierce, teacher Ian Sabala and former water polo coach Joshua Owens.

Owens, who is also a former Long Beach Fire Department lifeguard, pleaded guilty on Aug. 29 to sexually assaulting three girls, who were ages 14 to 16 when he met them through his part-time coaching job at the high school in La Palma. Sentenced to six months in county jail, Owens would have been looking at up to three years in state prison if he had been convicted without the guilty plea.

The civil suit alleges Earnest, Pierce, Jankowski, Wang and Sabala had prior knowledge of Owens' alleged abuses and that they failed to perform their mandatory duty of reporting the accusations to law enforcement.

In September, Stewart and other attorneys representing four female former student athletes at Kennedy High filed two separate lawsuits against AUHSD. Owens, girls' water polo coach Bahram Hojreh, International Water Polo Club and USA Water Polo, alleging the men sexually abused the underage plaintiffs and that school district and high school officials did nothing about the predatory behavior.

Besides being employed by AUHSD at Kennedy High, Hojreh coached water polo at the International Water Polo Club in Los Alamitos and was a member and agent of USA Water Polo, the sport's Olympic governing body. The UC Irvine graduate, who was a former member of the Men's NCAA Division 1 water polo team from 1994–98, pleaded not guilty at his arraignment last April and is still awaiting trial.

As of press time, AUHSD has not commented to the *Weekly* about the suits.

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Stranger Danger

BOB AUL

You were the hardcore bicyclist I saw at the Dana Point Harbor. At least, that's what your attire suggested. From a distance, you seemed to be telling off someone I couldn't see, and you kept it up as you walked toward me. I lowered my eyes to avoid contact. When you passed by again and burst out with swear words, I thought, "Oh, no, he has Tourette's! Poor guy!" And berated myself for assuming you were dangerous. Then I saw a guy that looked like an average fisherman go into a store, bend down and kiss the neck of a woman in a sundress. She was startled, looked at me and said he was a total stranger. My radar for stranger danger is on an epic fail.

HEY, YOU! Send anonymous thanks, confessions or accusations—changing or deleting the names of the guilty and innocent—to "Hey, You!" c/o *OC Weekly*, 18475 Bandilier Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708, or email us at letters@ocweekly.com.

Erika Jordan Loves Love

HOW THE B-MOVIE ACTRESS, CUSTOM-VIDEO DIRECTOR AND SEX THERAPIST DOES IT ALL

BY ANTHONY PIGNATARO

COURTESY ERIKA JORDAN

Erika Jordan is brushing her brown hair in her bathroom while telling me about feet. She's wearing a light-colored princess costume—from *The Princess and the Frog*—for a Halloween party she's preparing to attend with her infant son. This is why she's talking to me in the bathroom. Jordan, who lives in Long Beach, has her very young son, custom-video business and sex-therapy work occupying all her time, so the best way she could accommodate my interview request was with a Skype session from her bathroom while she prepared to go out.

Scheduling the session was far more difficult than I had anticipated. I knew she was extremely busy because it seems she's constantly posting a photo or meme or something on Instagram (@ErikaJordan). And she's always busy doing something, especially involving her Custom Dream Models (CDM) video business, which is why I wasn't too surprised to get the following email while trying to set up a Skype time:

"I have been on hold to shoot a video for CDM with [model] Skylar Rene," she wrote. "I am checking my P.O. box today, and if the 2 gallons of oil and kiddy pool are there, I have to shoot tomorrow in Tustin."

In any case, we finally set up a time, which is how we came to talking about feet—specifically, the very focused needs of one of her regular video clients.

"We get a lot of repeat customers," Jordan says. "We have one guy who gets a video every four months. It's just an hour straight of feet. You would think that 20 to 30 minutes would be enough, but he's adamant about it being 60 minutes. And most of the time, he picks the same model."

In addition to running a company that produces custom videos, Jordan also works as a sex therapist for her online company Virtualsexpert.com. She learned how to do this at Loveology University, a West Hollywood-based online "sexology" training school founded in 2007 by Dr. Ava Cadell, who is herself a former model and B-movie actress.

"Erika was one of my smartest students," Cadell says. "She's a highly intelligent person who is hungry for knowledge. I'm very proud of her."

Jordan still models, and because she also works as a health coach and fitness trainer, she often goes to the gym. Somewhere in all this, she's taking college classes to get her master's degree in clinical psychology and cares for her son. Her YouTube page has dozens of comedy bits, relationship advice, demo reels, and even a public-access-cable commercial she shot last year for Yorba Linda attorney Jeffrey Wilens, publicizing a class-action lawsuit he won against some Orange County motel owners who were screwing over the poor people who were staying there long-term. Oh, and every now and then, Jordan takes to Twitter to blast President Donald Trump.

"I am always told that as a public figure, I'm not supposed to have a political opinion so I don't alienate a demographic of my fan base," she says. "But I honestly can't help myself on occasion when it comes to Trump. He's mentally unstable, a pathological liar and has no right to be in politics. And I definitely get a little pushback when I post my opinion."

But at the heart of Jordan's work—all of it—is love. "I love love," Jordan says in a YouTube video explaining why she created Virtualsexpert.com. "Since I was a little girl, I was fascinated not only with love itself, but [also] what creates love; what are the traits that attract us to a person, and how to heal from a break-up; how to find the right person for you—not just go after the people that you're blindly attracted to."

Born in Ansbach, Germany, in 1982, Jordan and her family moved to Arizona when she was very young. It was not a happy childhood, she has said in another of her many YouTube videos. In fact, in her 2017 video titled "The Diary of a Playboy Bunny Turned Love Coach," Jordan says her parents didn't like each other and, at age 12, she was thrilled when they divorced.

Jordan said her home life made her "desperate for attention" when she was in middle school—so much so that, she says, she lost her virginity when she was 13 to a boy who told her she was pretty after a school recital. She moved out on her own when she turned 18, but, she says, "What I really wanted was a family."

Ironically, given the strife at home, Jordan chose to go into B-movies because of her mother. Or rather, she says, she went into acting because she didn't want to end up like her mother—a young woman who dreamed of being an artist but had to sideline that to raise a baby with a man she didn't even like. Jordan's plan was to basically live her life as she wanted in her young adult years, getting into *Playboy* and appearing in movies with tons of nudity and simulated sex, then settle down and raise a family later.

Jordan wasted little time. In fact, she was just 19 when she made her first movie, *Attack of the Virgin Mummies*. Jordan and two other white actresses play ancient Egyptian princesses who are killed by some evil guy, then are somehow reborn in contemporary Los Angeles, where the evil guy is now an evil mummy, so the princesses—who are now mummies, and whom I should probably mention are completely nude for most of the movie—have to destroy him with kickboxing. "It was hilarious and involved a martial-arts scene in which I had to fight the mummy on a stripper stage," Jordan recalls.

Getting a start in Hollywood was rough. "I had been in theater throughout my childhood, so I ended up auditioning almost right away when I moved to Los Angeles," Jordan says. "For the first six months, I was living out of a U-Haul, working seven days a week at a strip club to save up for a home, car and boobs, although not in that order. After I got settled, I started my career with *Playboy*. From *The Weekend Flash* to *Totally Busted* to *Canoga Park* and *The Playboy Morning Show*, I fell in love with sexy, funny style."

Jordan has appeared in *Playboy* eight times and hosted or co-hosted a couple of *Playboy TV* shows. She has also acted in movies such as *Piranhaconda*, *Avalanche Sharks* and *All American Bikini Car Wash*. "I really liked *After Midnight*," Jordan says. "It was one of the only movies I've done in which I was actually interested in reading the whole script and finding out what happens to all the other characters. *Stretch* with Jessica Alba and Chris Pine was also great, but that's mostly because of the residuals."

As far as B-movie acting was going, Jordan's career flourished. But her plan to not make the same choices as her mother proved incompatible with her dream of starting a family. "A lot of guys don't want to date a girl who's been on Cinemax and HBO," Jordan says in her 2017 biographical video. Her possible career choices outside of acting and modeling also became limited. "I can't wake up tomorrow and be an elementary-school teacher. It means that any occupation I go into, I would have to deal with the ramifications of my past."

In Jordan's case, she decided to deal with those ramifications by embracing her past.

"I am always told that as a public figure, I'm not supposed to have a political opinion so I don't alienate a demographic of my fan base," Erika Jordan says. "But I honestly can't help myself on occasion when it comes to Trump."

Custom Dream Models, which Jordan runs with a partner who has extensive Hollywood special-effects experience (because he still works in the mainstream film industry, she asked that we not name him), has been in business since 2003. But I only heard of the whole customized-adult-video industry a couple of years ago. It was the 2017 podcast *The Butterfly Effect*, written by Jon Ronson and produced by Lina Misitzis, that first alerted me to the world of "bespoke porn," adult videos custom-made for individual clients and their individual fetishes. The whole podcast dealt with how the internet has radically changed the entire porn industry, making it virtually impossible for most actors and directors to make anything close to the money they were earning before. That led to the rise of what Ronson called the "sweet and adorable world" of bespoke porn in a 2017 *Daily Telegraph* story on the podcast.

This fascinated me. In fact, when I finished listening to *The Butterfly Effect*, I commissioned a video of my own from Jordan's company (neither Jordan nor her company appeared in *The Butterfly Effect*). Titled "Strange Video Request," the comedy is about seven minutes long. While it doesn't contain sex or nudity, it does feature three bikini-clad actresses—including Jordan, who was a few months pregnant at the time—discussing the merits of an unusual custom-video script that had just arrived.

I wrote the script in about a day, then submitted it. Jordan wrote back a few days later, suggested a few rewrites to tighten it up and keep the budget manageable, and agreed to my request to post the completed video on YouTube (usually, companies such as Jordan's expressly forbid customers from posting their videos online). I wanted to see if Jordan's little company could, for just a few hundred dollars, actually make a true short film.

Jordan set the film at an LA mansion she was already using for another client's video, and she shot it in what looked like one take after she finished that video. The result clearly achieved everything I'd hoped for, but Jordan dashed any thought I had that what I sent her was in any way strange or even unique. In fact, as far as custom-video requests go, it's quite pedestrian.

She says oil-wrestling videos are the most popular requests, but those can take a toll on her body. "Oh, yeah!" Jordan responds when I ask if she has ever gotten injured doing wrestling videos. "I have a bad shoulder, so I tend to hurt it when doing stunts or wrestling. Some of the boxing, wrestling, MMA is fake, and occasionally, it's not. I did a match with [model and actress] Cali Logan that was 100 percent real, and it was exhausting, not to mention my shoulder kept me down for almost a week after that. Sometimes, when doing a stunt, I don't land correctly and injure myself that way, or I bruise my foot with a kick, but for the most part, I'm unscathed."

But there are also plenty of custom-

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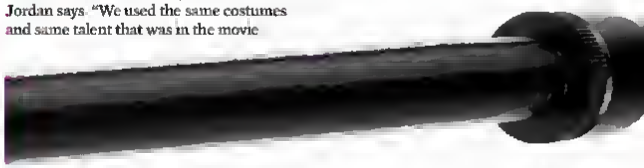
Erika Jordan Loves Love

» FROM PAGE 9

ers who make more unusual requests than simply seeing two models grapple in baby oil. "My favorite is that we have a customer who does sci-fi movies," Jordan says. One of those movies is about a shark that only attacks girls in bikinis, so the way girls save themselves is by removing their bikinis.

Another customer requested a full sequel to a previous movie Jordan had made. "We did a sequel to *Bikini Avengers*, a movie I did for HBO/Cinemax," Jordan says. "We used the same costumes and same talent that was in the movie



We rented a beautiful mansion on the top of a hill. It used a lot of visual effects, but there's nothing my partner can't do."

Then there's the customer who loves eyes. Like, really, really loves eyes. "There was a guy who wanted a 30-minute video of just the model's pupils while she was talking," Jordan says. "Just the pupils. In the video, she's talking about how mesmerizing her pupils were."

The cost for all this can vary widely. About the cheapest video Jordan has done was a mere clip, which cost $150. The more actresses, locations, special-effects requirements, sex and nudity you ask for, the higher the price. Jordan didn't have the exact figures in front of her when I asked, but she estimated that the guy who ordered the *Bikini Avengers* sequel paid between $7,000 and $8,000 for his custom video. "This particular customer wanted a sequel, but [he] also wanted to incorporate a hardcore scene into it," Jordan explains. "That drastically brought up the price."

was for the customer's eyes only. Because of the hardcore nature of many of these privately produced films, as well as the fact that many actresses make them with the understanding they won't be made public, customers are generally forbidden from posting them publicly.

In her 2017 biographical video, Jordan says that she's had "years and years of therapy"—which is understandable, given what she's said about her childhood. But she's also said—and I still can't get over how incredible this sounds given that Jordan isn't even 40—that she's "been on over a thousand first dates."

Asked how this was even possible, Jordan responds that she's been on "every online-dating website there is" and hired "a lot of matchmakers."

"That sounds pretty expensive," I naively say.

"Most matchmakers don't charge pretty girls," Jordan says.

Jordan says she benefits from her dating history in her work as a relationship coach at her website Virtualsexpert.com. Doled out via numerous videos on her YouTube page—with titles such as "How to Get Sex When Your Girlfriend Is Pregnant," "Sex Postures for Small Penises" and "Fingering 101"—her advice often centers on confidence. Figure out who you are first, what you want out of life and a relationship, be happy with that person, and then start looking for someone else.

Of course, in 2015, Jordan also filmed a slightly less serious advice video for SexSearch.com titled "How to Have Sex With a Canadian." In it, Jordan performs many different—and humorous—acts designed to seduce a Canadian man, including putting on lingerie and singing the Canadian national anthem. "If you sound anything like me, he'll have sex with you just to get you to stop singing," Jordan says in the video.

"God would not have given you a clitoris with its 8,000 nerve fibers if she didn't want you to play with it, since it has no function other than pleasure," says Ava Cadell.

Even given the cost, it's a really great value when you consider the customer has basically just produced an actual movie. Of course, you also have to take into account that the whole spectacle

Cadell, whose school helped train Jordan in sexology, couldn't say enough nice things about her. "We have hundreds of students graduating every year from all

INSET IMAGE COURTESY ERIKA JORDAN

over the world," Cadell says. "Erika stood out. I hadn't met her, yet she was emailing me constantly—not only asking questions, but also giving constructive criticism, which I truly love."

In today's world of relationship advice and "sexology," Cadell is a legend. The author of 10 books and countless magazine articles, Cadell travels around the world hosting seminars and giving talks that aim to remove shame and guilt from people's sex lives. Her "go-to line" for women, which she included in her 2015 *Marie Claire* article "Why I Became a Sexologist," is epic: "God would not have given you a clitoris with its 8,000 nerve fibers if she didn't want you to play with it, since it has no function other than pleasure."

"I love to mentor people who want to do what I do," Cadell says. "Erika's good with people, good with the media. She can write, and she's beautiful. I've had a few really beautiful students who thought they could rely on their physical looks. They didn't do the work, and I refused to mentor them."

That Jordan's clientele is mostly men shouldn't be too surprising. "I get [clients with] erectile dysfunction quite a bit," Jordan says. "I get a lot of guys in their 20s who haven't lost their virginity yet and are worried about that. Or they can find girls to date but can't keep them around."

To help them, Jordan uses a few tools that were science fiction when I was in my 20s. One is what she calls a "mock date," which she conducts via Skype. "It really helps me see what they're doing wrong," she says. "A lot of guys are nervous, not able to be confident and calm when there's silence in a conversation. They may come across as needy and insecure, and that tends to turn most people off. A lot of them think being a dick gets the girl. But a lot of times, the dick is just the guy who aggressively pursued the woman."

After the mock date, Jordan will write a page-long report for the client on what he's doing right and wrong. She'll also tag along on a client's date—though only by text—as what she calls a "virtual wing girl."

"I have done actual wing-girl stuff," she says, referring to a friend who tags along on a date to assist the person trying to meet someone. "But some guys just want someone they can text. I just like to get them to tune in and get out of their head. A lot of people have trouble because of a lack of self-esteem. A lot of people are desperate to go out. A woman can see what's going on."

Talking to Jordan, it's clear to me that though she has a lot of seemingly unrelated jobs—actor, custom-video director, relationship coach—they all mesh from time to time and in the unlikeliest places. For instance, it had never occurred to me that her custom videos could also serve a therapeutic role.

"Custom Dream Models has a little of that, without meaning to do so," Jordan says. "One guy had a wife who passed away, and he asked for a model who kind of looked like her. In the video, she tells him that his particular fetish was okay."

"That's kind of sad," I say.

"Yeah," she says. "But it helped him heal."

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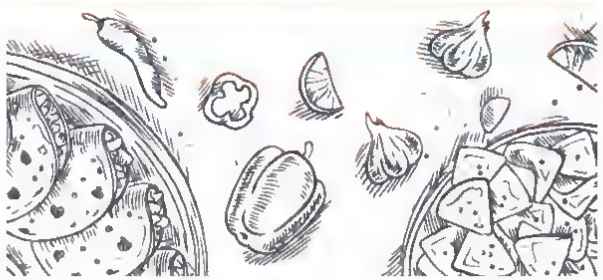

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tuesday›
TAKING YOU HIGHER

COURTESY OF CYPRESS HILL

fri/02/15

[FILM]

STILL FANTASTIC

Fantastic Planet

If René Laloux's 1973 animated film *Fantastic Planet* were released for the first time today, it'd still make waves and unwind minds. It resembles nothing else, although there's some kind of compatibility with French artist Moebius' *ligne claire* aben-scapes and maybe Chris Foss' omnicol-ored space scenes. *Fantastic Planet* is alive within its own limitlessness, where ad-hoc rules of sci-fi dissolve and anything can (and does) happen. It's almost like a fairy tale, but drawn from the future and not the past, and nearly 50 years later, it remains happily and chansmatically strange. Local documentarian/filmmaker/musician/writer Steve Elkins—who deserves a write-up of his own—will host a discussion after the screening. Expect something fantastic, in every sense of the word.

Fantastic Planet at the Fullerton Museum Center, 301 N. Pomona Ave., Fullerton, (714) 738-6545, cityoffullerton.com. 7 p.m. $8-$10. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

[THEATER]

Mature Muppets

Avenue Q

While Valentine's Day weekend is always kind of a bummer for most of us, one thing we can all agree on is that watching muppets sing raunchy showtunes is a guaranteed mood booster. If you haven't yet seen *Avenue Q*, now's your chance (and also, where the heck have you been?) because the multiple-Tony-winning musical comedy comes to Chapman University's Musco Center for the Arts for a three-day run. Sing along with such favorites as "Everyone's a Little Bit Racist" and "The Internet Is for Porn," and if you're a *Q* newbie, you may have just gathered this show is for mature audiences only.

MORE » ONLINE
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Avenue Q at Musco Center for the Arts, 1 University Dr., Orange, (714) 997-6624, muscocenter.org. 7:30 p.m.; also Sat. $10-$25.
—ERIN DEWITT

sat/02/16

[COMEDY]

COCKTAIL COMEDY

Sips and Giggles

The LGBT Center OC's annual Sips and Giggles brings together comedy-loving guests to enjoy delicious cocktails and good jokes with the goal of keeping the Center afloat to continue serving the community. This year's stellar host is beloved comedian Rhea Butcher, who is known far and wide for a sense of humor that circles around topics such as being a butch lesbian, feminism and veganism; they have also been a writer, director, actor and podcast host. Enjoy a preliminary cocktail hour at the Center, then join Butcher at the Frida Cinema downstairs for a delightful comedy set. Following the show is a meet-and-greet with the Akron, Ohio, native. So grab a drink and get ready to throw your head back from some hearty laughs!

Sips and Giggles with Rhea Butcher at the LGBT Center, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 953-5428, www.lgbtcenter.org. Cocktail hour 6 p.m., show, 8 p.m. $40-$1,500. —AIMEE MURILLO

[CONCERT]

(He)Art Laboe!

Valentine's Super Love Jam

Every Sunday night might as well be Valentine's Day with legend Art Laboe on the radio. The velvet-voiced host takes our requests and dedications to the ones we love, even delivering smooches over the airwaves—just as he has for decades. Though the actual Valentine's Day has already passed, Laboe plays cupid by bringing his show live to Anaheim, turning the Honda Center into one big prom night for *vatos* and *hynas*, young and old. For his Valentine's Super Love Jam, Laboe has assembled an epic lineup that includes the Delfonics, Heatwave, Barbara Lynn, and Peaches and Herb, just to name a few among others! Songs such as "La-La Means I Love You," "Reunited" and "Always and Forever" will keep the mood relaxed and romantic. Now, go make babies!

Valentine's Super Love Jam at the Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 704-2400; www.hondacenter.com. 7:30 p.m. $35-$329.
—GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

sun/02/17

[FILM]

When Mario Met Natalia

Le Notti Bianche

Sad, Russian, existential, erotic longing meets sad, gorgeous, existential, erotic, Italian-style longing in neorealist film master Luchino Visconti's adaptation of the Dostoyevsky short story "White Nights," the 1957 black-and-white classic *Le Notti Bianche*. Maria Schell is young, beautiful and old-world. Marcello Mastroianni is young, beautiful and skeptical of her romantic fantasies. There are cobblestone streets, motor scooters, a stray dog, and an iconic dance scene set to rock & roll music, but shadows of loneliness and falsity fall across it all.

Cinema Italiano: *Le Notti Bianche* at Bowers Museum, 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 567-3600, www.bowers.org. 12:30 p.m. $12 —ANDREW TONKOVICH

[PERFORMING ARTS]

Showtunes Shine

MGM in Concert

As much as audiences love the latest developments in cinematic arts, there's nothing quite like enjoying a classic musical, namely one produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). They are the site of romantic idealism, ridiculously colorful sets, and unforgettable songs and musical numbers written by talented composers ranging from the Gershwins to Frank Loesser. Today's concert recalls the music from MGM's golden age, including the iconic *Singing In the Rain*, *An American In Paris*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *Kiss Me Kate* and more. This feast for the ears of any classic musical fan is directed by and stars Tony Santamauro and includes vocalists Jon Peterson and Christy Mauro-Cohen.

MGM in Concert at Cabrillo Playhouse, 202 Avenida Cabrillo, San Clemente, (949) 492-0465, cabrilloplayhouse.org. 2 & 6 p.m. $25. —AIMEE MURILLO

mon/02/18

[AMUSEMENT PARKS]

Good Grief

Peanuts Celebration

For the launch of its 2019 Seasons of Fun, Knott's Berry Farm is amping up its saturation of Peanuts characters and attractions. That means Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, Sally and other characters from Charles M. Schultz's classic cartoon strip will venture beyond Camp Snoopy into more areas of the amusement park, with Peanuts-themed performances (including Woodstock's Music Festival), activities (such as the Pig Pen Ivery stable), backdrops for photo ops and themed treats. Come get your Peanuts fix!

Peanuts Celebration at Knott's Berry Farm, 8039 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 220-5200, www.knotts.com 10 a.m. $46-$218. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

tue/02/19

[CONCERT]

High Times

West Coast High

Though President's Day has literally nothing to do with weed, don't let that stop you from lighting up before heading to the House of Blues the day after we honor the nation's chief executives, past and present, for better or worse. The evening features two of the more outspoken proponents of marijuana in Cypress Hill and Hollywood Undead. Their fondness for cannabis can only be matched by the number of hit songs in their decades-long careers. Also on the bill this hazy night are Demrick and Xzibit, whose green credentials can't be disputed either.

West Coast High at the House of Blues at Anaheim Gardenwalk, 400 Disney Way, Ste. 337, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim. 6:30 p.m. $34.50 —WYOMING REYNOLDS

wed/02/20

[CONCERT]

Sing Along With . . .

The Coathangers

Loud, irreverent and undeniably fun, the Coathangers are everything a great rock & roll band should be. Since 2007, these Atlantans have been relentless in bringing their standoffish, face-melting brand of psychedelic punk to the world. Their prolific catalog—which includes titles such as "Bimbo," "Watch Your Back" and "Shut the Fuck Up"—is a testament to their musical versatility and die-hard dedication. This year, they're embarking on a tour to promote *The Devil You Know*, which comes out on March 8. Be ready to break a sweat.

The Coathangers and Prettiest Eyes at Marty's On Newport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995, martysonnewport.com. 8 p.m. $15. 21+ —STEVE DONOFRIO

[ART]

Now You See It

Christa Sommerer & Laurent Mignonneau

After 30 years of creating art together, Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau bring a joint exhibition of their art to UC Irvine's Beall Center for Art + Technology. With a focus on the physical and nonphysical worlds and the help of virtual reality, this show features fresh artwork from the duo, as well as older pieces from their respective backgrounds of botany and video. Take a journey into the minds of the artists as you don a VR headset that brings you into the canvases—one even virtually puts you in a room full of oversized flies! Get ready to enter a world of creativity and visually stimulating experiences.

Christa Sommerer & Laurent Mignonneau at Beall Center for Art + Technology, 712 Arts Plaza, Irvine, (949) 824-6206; beallcenter.uci.edu. Noon. Through March 25. Free. —LAUREN GALVAN

thu/02/21

[COMEDY]

Funny Girl

Nicole Byer

If you don't know who Nicole Byer is, you may be living under a rock. From her relatable stories on MTV's *Girl Code* to judging Netflix's popular cooking show *Nailed it!*, Byer has been making people laugh all over the world. The crude yet charming comedian speaks her mind and isn't afraid to be herself. While her humor seems self-deprecating at first, it becomes an outlet for empowerment through Byer's loud, in-your-face punchlines. For one night only, she'll take the stage at the Improv in Irvine, turning this normal Thursday night into one to remember.

Nicole Byer at the Irvine Improv, 527 Spectrum Center Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-5455, improv.com/irvine. 8 p.m. $20. 18+. —MORGAN EDWARDS

[FILM]

Only the Lonely

In a Lonely Place

Although one of Humphrey Bogart's lesser-known films, this 1950 thriller about a violence-prone, struggling Hollywood writer who finds himself immersed in a real-life murder is now considered one of his finest performances. Produced by his own company and directed by Nicholas Ray, the film noir also stars Ray's wife, actress Gloria Grahame, as a B-grade thespian looking for a break—and maybe more. Adapted from Dorothy B. Hughes' 1947 novel of the same name, *In a Lonely Place* was released the same year as the more famous Tinseltown takedown *Sunset Blvd.* and offers yet another look at the gritty underbelly of Los Angeles and the pitfalls of celebrity.

In a Lonely Place at Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-8971, lagunaartmuseum.org. 6 p.m. Free with RSVP. —SR DAVIES

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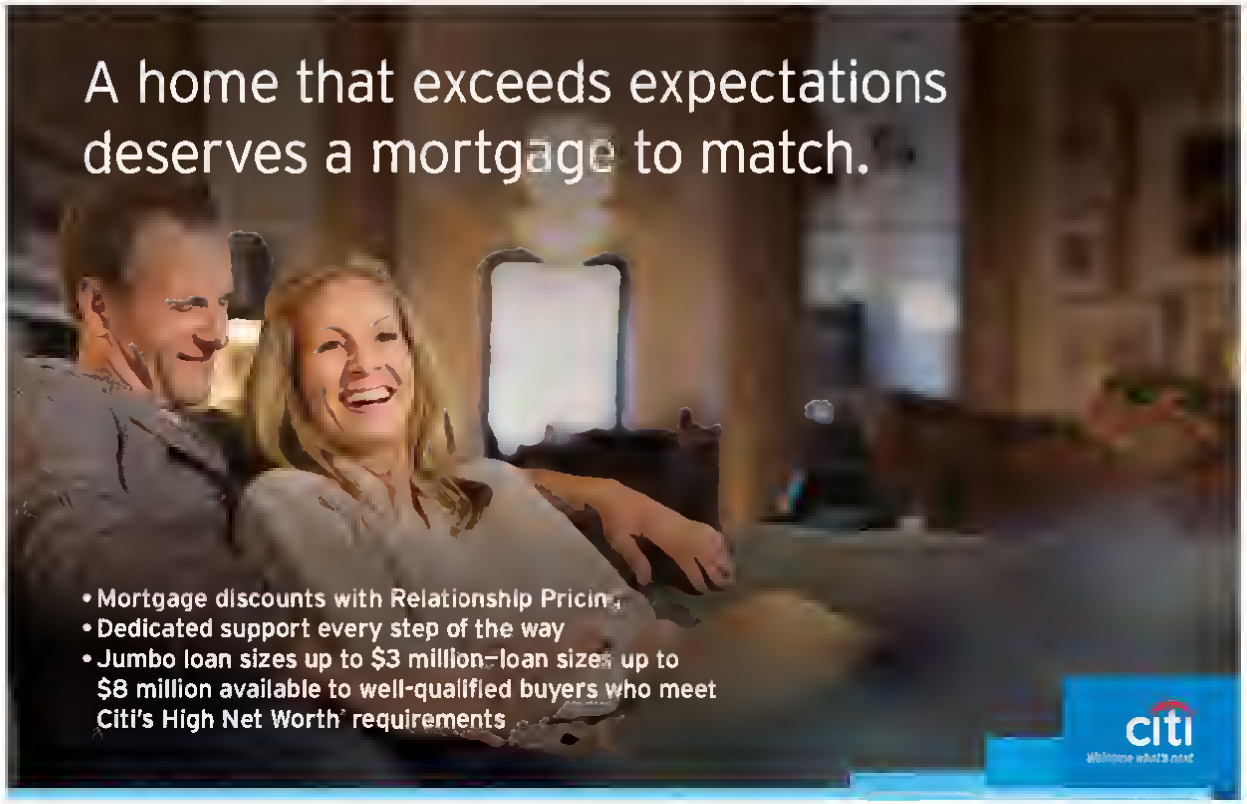
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Will You Be My Valentino?

Legendary restaurateur Piero Selvaggio starts his second act with Louie's By the Bay in Newport Beach

BY EDWIN GOEI

Before this year, I didn't know the name Piero Selvaggio, but I knew of Valentino. Selvaggio's Santa Monica institution is credited by many for introducing Angelenos to ingredients such as prosciutto and balsamic vinegar. In the process, it distinguished itself from an ocean of old-school red-sauce joints and ushered in the kind of Italian fine dining we know today. Evidence of its influence extends to its alumni: Both Rossoblu's Steve Samson and Factory Kitchen's Angelo Auriana cut their teeth at Valentino. So when that restaurant closed last year after 47 years, it made all the papers.

But along with the tributes, there was news that just as Valentino was winding down, Selvaggio—who has been living in Orange County for the past three years—was preparing to open a new place with partner Ron Salisbury of El Cholo.

I'd never been to Valentino, but reading up on its storied history and, in turn, learning more about Selvaggio, I realized his bringing Louie's By the Bay to Newport Beach was nothing short of seismic. After all, according to *Italy Magazine*, he was "the man who changed Italian cuisine in the U.S."

So I secured my reservations weeks ahead of time and anticipated an expensive evening. After all, this was Mariner's Mile and it was taking over what was formerly the Ritz Prime Seafood, which wasn't cheap either. Plus, Louie's is a steakhouse.

The dry-aged hunks of beef start at $46 for a 12-ounce New York strip and skyrocket to $104 for a 34-ounce Porterhouse for two. And the French fries and the creamed spinach you'd want with it? As at most steakhouses, sides are sold a la carte, here for $7 each.

Bucking conventional steakhouse wisdom, I opted for the pork chop. The Sicilian herbs and fennel pollen that encrusted this bone-in hog steak wafted a fragrance that turned out to also account for most of its flavor. And this was a good thing because the meat seemed underbrined. As a result, after some initial juiciness, it got dryer and dryer the longer it sat.

For a side, I ignored my server's recommendation of the creamed corn, which is named after Hans Prager, the late owner of the Ritz and yet another giant in the industry. Instead I chose the Yukon Gold Potato Flan, a dollop of mashed potato covered in crispy breadcrumbs and bacon bits served in a ramekin too large for the less-than-generous serving. By then, I'd invested $55 into the meal.

PHOTOS BY EDWIN GOEI

I could have spent less if I stayed within the pasta menu, which hovers between $23 to $28 per dish. If it means anything to you, some of the pasta is imported from Pastificio Cuomo, a historic factory in Gragnano, Italy, that has been making the product since 1840. But if you think you won't be able to appreciate the difference between the brand and Barilla, you should opt for the house-made fresh pasta, as I did. Among the offerings are gnocchi and lasagna, the dish I ultimately chose.

Described on the menu as crispy, the item turned out to be just a normal lasagna that spent a few extra minutes under the broiler to singe the top sheet. While the other pasta layers were silken, the bland cheese and the mild bolognese barely registered a blip. It was so lacking the beefy richness, tomatoey tanginess and ooey-gooey, cheesy decadence I associate with the red-checkered tablecloth classic that it made me question whether my standards of measurement on this dish were all wrong. After all, if this is the lasagna that "the man who changed Italian cuisine in the U.S." has deemed worthy of serving, could it be possible that the other lasagnas to which I'm accustomed were inauthentic?

That question dogged me the entire night, a night that actually started with a wonderful grilled octopus that, for once, didn't taste just like a turkey breast cold cut. The Louie's version—served atop jet-black pellets of squid-ink couscous—had a pleasant fishiness and just enough of its rubbery texture intact. And there was a comforting soup of puréed green vegetables enriched by cream and butter. I slurped and ate it in concert with a basket of bread that included arrow-straight breadsticks that are exactly like Pocky, but without the chocolate.

It was at that point that I took stock of what I liked about the place: that octopus, the soup, the ambiance of the room covered in wood slats that look as if they were reclaimed from a boardwalk. And then I saw him, Selvaggio himself, the only gentleman wearing a suit and tie. He thanked me as I was leaving. I thanked him, too, because even if I didn't love everything I had, I was grateful to see his remarkable story continue here.

LOUIE'S BY THE BAY
2601 W. Coast Hwy., Newport Beach, (949) 720-1800; louiesnewport.com. Open Sun.-Thurs., 5-9 p.m., Fri.-Sat., 5-11 p.m. Entrees, $23-$104. Full bar.

WHAT THE ALE
» GREG NAGEL

Liquid Candy

It wasn't until I used the restroom at Tustin Brewing Co. after drinking the latest batch of Portola Breakfast Stout that I started to feel like a civet. The animal, sort of a raccoon-like mongoose cat, is known for creating the world's best coffee beans by eating ripe coffee berries, then pooping them out.

Brewer Jerrod Larsen's stout is just as world-renowned as Kopi Luwak coffee, winning big in two World Beer Cups, taking bronze in 2016 and gold in 2018. If one could pour a pint of the beer inside an actual World Beer Cup, they would be slightly buzzed, not only from the 9 per cent ABV beer, but also from the huge hit of Portola Ethiopian coffee blend that's woven into the dense, chocolatey stout.

"This is the fifth time I've brewed this ale," Larsen notes while stroking his big bushy beard. "This is also the highest alcohol it's ever been, which kind of helps the overall balance and sweetness."

I can see what the World Beer Cup judges saw in the sexy black beer. "It kind of reminds me of a beer version of Cuban sipping chocolate," notes my cacao-enthusiast wife. Aromatically, it's like a fresh mocha.

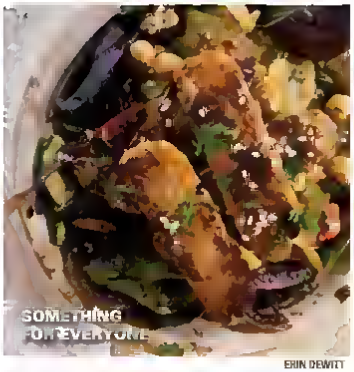
Orange County is home to several medal-winning coffee beers, mostly thanks to Jeff Duggan's custom Portola Coffee Lab blends. Turns out, Duggan is a homebrewer and knows how to combine custom-origin blends and roasting techniques to get such a lush stout.

TUSTIN BREWING CO
13011 Newport Ave., Ste. 100, Tustin, (714) 665-2337, tustinbrewery.com

GREG NAGEL

Eat Vegan

Or not. At Bodhi's Korner, it's up to you



ERIN DEWITT

LONG BEACH LUNCH

» ERIN DEWITT

Though Bodhi's Korner hasn't officially held a grand opening since its debut a few months ago (the staff say they're still ironing out the menu and will have a soft opening in the very near future), this little vegan-friendly spot seems pretty settled in its corner in the Marketplace Long Beach lot (next to Trader Joe's, BevMo and Veggie Grill), which is noteworthy, considering other, larger restaurants in the complex have shuttered, their storefronts empty for many months.

But Bodhi's Korner, owned by Ramona Streit and Joe Byron (who also own one of the city's favorite breakfast spots, Egg Heaven Cafe), has found its own niche.

"Most of our food is made in less than 10 minutes, so we often see people order something while they get their shopping done, banking or any other chores they may have," says manager Matthew Streit, who is also Ramona's son.

Taking over the space formerly occupied by Roots Café, Bodhi's Korner is a vegan-friendly quick-stop, sure, but maybe that's being too modest. Bodhi's could be its own dining destination, more than just a hey-I'm-hungry-and-there's-a-place afterthought.

Open every day from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. (or 3 p.m. on the weekends), Bodhi's Korner is a small establishment—order at the counter, then sit at a window-facing bar or a set of patio tables on the sidewalk, and watch cars vie for spaces in one of the most irritating parking lots in the city.

Though the menu has a prominently displayed vegan side, don't stop there or you'll miss the jackfruit tacos, hidden amongst otherwise-carnivorous choices.

Sold as a single or a pair, the jackfruit taco is a messy but satisfying three-bite encounter. A solo coro tortilla is layered with marinated and shredded jackfruit, pico de gallo, cabbage and lime. Douse it with the provided tub of rust-colored salsa, and eat it quickly because it will fall apart.

The Vegan Power Bowl, a heartier option, weighs down its compostable serving bowl with strips of grilled tempeh and seasonal veggies (in this case, zucchini, onions and red bell peppers), plus chickpeas, tabouli and dark mixed greens. Dressings come as a duo of chunky bell pepper hummus and a silky citrus-tahini sauce.

The house specialty, however, is the zucchini-noodle pasta, offered in two ways: as the Creamy Garlic Pasta, which comes with a silky vegan sauce, sundried tomatoes and basil, or the Bolognese, a vegan version of the meaty classic that replaces the animal product with lentils that are tossed in a robust sauce with sweet tomatoes, garlic and oregano, then loaded over green noodles that are angel-hair thin and delicate (much nicer than anything I've tried to make at home using some weird zoodle contraption). Bodhi's Korner even throws in some nut-based crumbles resembling Parmesan. In the case of vegan food trying to disguise itself as a meat-based comfort classic, this one actually passes.

But there's no shortage of actual meat here. Though Bodhi's Korner distinguishes itself as a plant-based dining option, it also serves foul, beef and fish in its sandwiches, wraps, salads and soups. There's a house-made turkey burger on a brioche bun, and the breakfast Monterey Bowl comes with eggs, three kinds of pork, cheese, mushrooms and avocado.

"We've heard our community," Streit explains, adding Bodhi's Korner is a restaurant "where vegans and meat-eaters can come together to share a meal"—a welcome statement considering many restaurants tend to favor one diet over the other. Just watch out for that Trader Joe's traffic!

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GREG NAGEL

Cave Fantasies

Marché Moderne's steak frites au poivre

Some cravings in life can best be attributed to some distant relative's DNA tingling from deep inside, sending some sort of scientific bat signal from within. For me, it usually comes by way of odd European fare: perogies and kielbasa, spaetzle and ham, sometimes a steamy bowl of French onion soup.

Tonight, my 1 percent Napolean Bonaparte-like, 23andMe DNA strand sent me on a wild ride to the French Quarter of Newport Coast at Marché Moderne; seconds after I parked on a rainy coastal night, I could hear a bog filled with an army of frogs. "I wonder if they have frogs' legs on the menu," I said half-jokingly, diving into the restaurant, hunched over, Neanderthal-like in a pair of slip-on Vans.

Scientifically speaking, the desire to chow down in cold weather stems from our primitive origins, back when the fittest survived by gorging on food as the days were shorter and temperatures cooler. Marché Moderne's menu is perhaps the best place to indulge in such cave-like fantasies.

"Today, chef is doing a homage dish of salmon and sorrel," my well-dressed server noted. A quick Google search reveals the dish originated with three-star Michelin chef Michel Troisgros. Thin salmon cutlets are flash-fried, then placed on thin ribbons of tart sorrel and a satisfying cream sauce. When served, the dish hits like a playbook for how to produce primordial-like, chest-pounding moments while eating: Mop your bites in the sauce as you try to resist yelling as if you were Tarzan.

But this place is probably the furthest thing from a cave, and the food and décor are both exquisitely Moderne. The bar sets the tone with an aquarium-sized Cruvinet wine dispenser and a suave set of red-toothed patrons surrounding it. "I'll start with a Sancerre," I say, trying to sound fancy.

"We have Les 7 Hommes Sancerre Blanc, an upper Loire white," says Marché's bartender. A quick swirl bursts bold, floral honeysuckle; night jasmine; and orange buds with mouth-watering acidity—a perfect match for the salmon and sorrel.

From the dining room, you can view the show in the glassed-off kitchen, as the chef-hive silently sets aflame dishes in various copper pans. It also gives you a look into what a married couple can achieve, as Florent and Amelia Marneau are not only owners, but also chefs.

The menu has classics such as coq au vin and crispy duck confit, but something about seeing steak frites au poivre cut me to the core. "I must eat that," I grunted.

Actual French-style fries—stiff enough on the outside to play the drums, yet soft enough on the inside to melt souls—are piled festively like the Eiffel Tower. The steak, crusted with various herbs and peppercorns, made my arm hairs grow like a werewolf after the first bite.

"*Parlez-vous* sexy?" I mutter, forking the steak and wild mushrooms with an evil smile.

Dessert seemed like a blur after coming to on the couch the next morning. Was that crème fraîche and black winter truffle vanilla ice cream all a dream? The to-go box with a leftover madeleine tells no lies.

Eat & Drink This Now

» GREG NAGEL

MARCHE MODERNE

7862 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Newport Beach, (714) 434-7900, Marchemoderne.net.

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Pinnacle Vodka 1.75L (Reg. $19.99) **SALE $10.99**

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Voice for the Voiceless

Inside This Peace exposes an Agent Orange victim's moving story

BY MATT COKER

For the most part, Thoa Nguyen is a typical woman in her mid-thirties. She is slender, wears her long black hair in a ponytail and has a pleasant demeanor.

Before we see the subject of Lina Linh Nga's sobering new documentary *Inside This Peace*, we are treated to street scenes in Thoa's bustling Vietnamese town. The camera then glides into Thoa's flat, where the only light comes through a floor-to-ceiling opening facing the roadway. Thoa sits in the shadows with her back to the camera as we hear faint street noises, a chirping gecko and the sewing machine she is working.

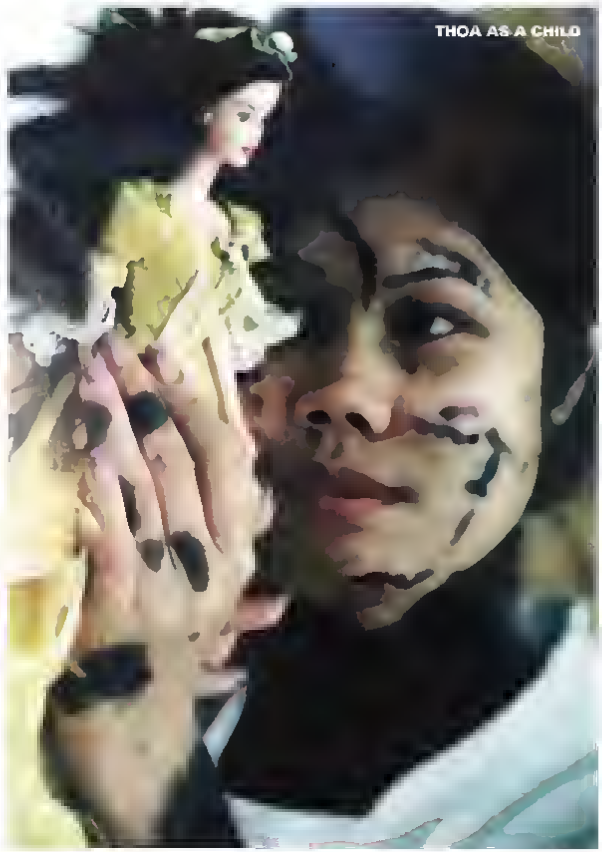
When the camera turns to face Thoa, light catches her cheek, which has black spots and random scars similar to those of a measles patient. As she dutifully presses fabric toward the sewing machine needle, we see her hand and arm are covered in large dark patches. Life in the city and her flat are going on as she begins to narrate her own moving life story.

Before Thoa was born in 1985, black patches covering her while she was in the womb were detected by doctors, who recommended her financially poor parents terminate the pregnancy or give her up for adoption. They did neither. Newborn Thoa had not only the patches, but also lumps and prickly hairs all over her. The lumps were filled with fluid that could not be drained. Her parents later had a second child, a boy, who suffered serious heart disease from day one. He passed away at age 7.

The family blames the siblings' conditions on the father's exposure to Agent Orange while drinking rainwater as he served as a soldier deployed to Cambodia. During the Vietnam War, as part of Operation Ranch Hand from 1962-'71, the U.S. dumped millions of gallons of herbicides—including the defoliant dioxin (a.k.a. Agent Orange)—across Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The herbicidal warfare was aimed at killing trees and crops that provided forest cover and food sources to Viet Cong soldiers.

An unintended consequence was that 4 million Vietnamese people were exposed to a chemical no one fully understood at the time. We understand now Agent Orange exposure has been linked to rashes, cancer, birth defects, and severe psychological and neurological problems not only among the Vietnamese, but also U.S. servicemen and the offspring of both.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam provides benefits to its citizens suffering from medical issues related to Agent Orange, but Thoa's family have been denied such assistance for decades because their patriarch served in 1978—three years after the last U.S. chopper departed Saigon.



THOA AS A CHILD

3569 FILMS

It's not part of the film, but Thoa's family is in good company. Some Vietnam War-era American military veterans have also been denied benefits tied to Agent Orange exposure. For instance, those who served in Vietnam's inland waterways—whom some call Brown Water veterans—are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange, which helps fast-track their benefit claims. Advocates have been fighting for years to extend the same presumption to those known as Blue Water veterans, those who served on ships off Vietnam's coast.

Blue Water veterans were covered under the Agent Orange Act of 1991, but the Veterans Administration later stipulated that serving off the coast did not, by itself, make one eligible for benefits. Just before Democrats recently took control of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congress sought to finally rectify that by unanimously passing the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, but Senate Republicans Mike Lee of Utah and Mike Enzi of Wyoming blocked the legislation from advancing to a vote in December.

Lee said he was concerned about the science regarding exposure to Blue Water veterans, a notion that was backed by President Donald Trump's appointed VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, who argued it would be unfair to use inconclusive science as a basis to treat 90,000 Blue Water veterans when other veterans are held to a higher standard of evidence to justify medical coverage.

Enzi cited a Congressional Budget Office conclusion that the bill would cost at least $1.3 billion more than the price tag House members were told it would. The government has already paid benefits to nearly 570,000 veterans and 200,000 survivors for Agent Orange-related illnesses and is spending hundreds of millions of dollars more to clean up herbicide contamination around the world, including Vietnam. Meanwhile, the Blue Water Navy bill could open the door to U.S. veterans of other wars, including combatants who link their cancers and respiratory problems to toxic exposure in Iraq and Afghanistan.

By the way, during the government shutdown, Lee and Enzi expressed support for funding Trump's border wall, although the Utah senator did go on to cast one of two lone Republican votes in his chamber opposing a bill that included funding for it.

Until the 1990s, the VA recognized only one ailment as being linked to Agent Orange: chloracne. The skin condition, which is associated with overexposure to dioxins, produces acne-like eruptions of cysts, pustules and blackheads, which is what you find all over Thoa. *Inside This Peace* includes a Vietnamese magazine's photo of her as a child, with protrusions visible on her coal-black back. That has not altered, as we see when the adult Thoa changes her top.

In January, Nga's enlightening film won an Impact DOCS award and was named the Best Feature Documentary at the California Women's Film Festival. A trailer will be out later this month, and the filmmaker promises an upcoming free screening somewhere in Orange County, where $2 donations will be collected to support Agent Orange victims. She also plans to release the film on DVD and via streaming in May and to publish a companion book next year.

In an email, Nga says her aim is "to raise the voice for the forgotten victims of Agent Orange, the invisible and voiceless, and to raise awareness about Agent Orange, to address the consequences of war. We cannot ignore the desperate cries of help from our brothers, sisters, friends, from brave men and women who have willingly given their lives selflessly for freedom's cause."

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

Track the progress of Inside This Peace *at InsideThisPeaceMovie.com and the Blue Water veterans movement at DenyDenyUntilTheyDie.com.*

Don't Stop Believin'

BY MATT COKER

2019 Oscar Nominated Short Films: Animation. The nominees screening are *Bao* (USA); *Late Afternoon* (Ireland), *Animal Behaviour* (Canada), *Weekends* (USA) *One Small Step* (USA and China). *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Thurs., Feb. 14, 11 a.m., 3:35, 5:25 & 10 p.m. $8-$10; also at Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557 5701 Thurs., Feb. 14, 11:30 a.m., 2:15, 5:30 & 7 p.m. $9-$11*

Green Book. Working-class Italian-American bouncer drives an African-American classical pianist on a tour of venues through the 1960s American South. *Various theaters; www.fandango.com. Check website for show times and ticket prices.*

The Wife. Glenn Close plays a spouse who questions her life choices on the way to Sweden, where her husband is getting a Nobel Prize *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Thurs., Feb 14, 11:15 a.m. & 4:35 p.m. $8-$10 also at Edwards Westpark 8, (844) 462 7342. Thurs., Feb. 14, 3:20 p.m. $10.20-$13.20.*

They Shall Not Grow Old. Peter Jackson's "most personal" film is this 2018 World War I documentary that was culled from archival footage and 600 hours of BBC interviews *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Thurs., Feb. 14, 11:20 a.m. & 4:40 p.m. $8-$10.*

Mardaanika the Queen of Jhansi. Radha Krishna Jagarlamudi's new action/bio-drama is on one of the leading figures of the Indian Rebellion of 1857. *Edwards Westpark 8, (844) 462 7342. Thurs., Feb. 14, 12:25, 4:10 & 7:50 p.m. $10.20-$13.20.*

Vice. Adam McKay's 2018 bio-drama details the rise of Dick Cheney, the most powerful vice president in history *Various theaters; www.fandango.com. Check website for show times and ticket prices.*

Gully Boy. A coming-of-age story based on the lives of street rappers in Mumbai. *Edwards Westpark 8, (844) 462-7342. Thurs., Feb 14, 12:40, 4:30 & 8:10 p.m. $10.20-$13.20.*

Bohemian Rhapsody. The formation rise and fall of the English rock band Queen. *Various theaters; www.fandango.com. Check website for show times and ticket prices.*

The Favourite. England's Queen Anne is in ill health and bad temper as her friend and servant make power grabs. *Various theaters; www.fandango.com. Check website for show times and ticket prices.*

2019 Oscar Nominated Short Films: Live Action. The nominees screening are *Madre* (Spain); *Fauve* (Canada); *Marguerite* (Canada); *Detainment* (Ireland); *Skin* (USA). *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency*

WARNER BROS

Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Thurs., Feb. 14, 1, 5:30 & 8:10 p.m. $8-$10; also at Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701 Thurs., Feb. 14, 4:15 & 9 p.m. $9-$11

Ek Ladki Ko Dekha Toh Aisa Laga. Sweety must contend with her family, a young writer smitten with her, and a society and true love who may not accept her family *Edwards Westpark 8, (844) 462 7342. Thurs., Feb. 14, 1:35, 4:45 & 8:30 p.m. $10.20-$13.20.*

Harold and Maude. A young man's obsession with death changes when he meets an effervescent 79-year-old woman *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org Thurs., Feb. 14, 2, 4, 6 & 8 p.m. $7-$10.*

The Man Who Killed Hitler and Then the Bigfoot. Decades after secretly telling Adolf Hitler for the U.S. government, a clandestine hero is called back into action to take out Bigfoot *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Feb. 14, 2, 4, 6 & 8:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Casablanca. An American expatriate falls to pieces when the lover who ghosted him walks into his Morocco gin joint at the beginning of World War II. *Regency San Juan Capistrano, (949) 661-3456. Thurs., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. $14, also at the Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org Thurs., Feb. 21, mixer, 6:30 p.m., fifth-anniversary presentation and screening, 7:30 p.m. $20 (includes drinks, hors d'oeuvres, movie popcorn and soda).*

Sunrise. The Jack Curtis Dubowsky Ensemble performs the live score as F.W. Murnau's classic 1927 silent romance rolls. *Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org Thurs., Feb. 14, 8 p.m. $13.50 (or $77 when bundled with dinner at Lola's Mexican Cuisine across the street).*

My Bloody Valentine. A man returns to his hometown on the 10th anniversary of the Valentine's-night massacre that claimed 22 lives. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Feb. 14, 10 p.m. $7-$10.*

BlacKkKlansman. In the early 1970s, a black police detective tries to make a name for himself by infiltrating the Ku Klux Klan. *Various theaters, www.fandango.com. Check website for show times and ticket prices.*

Blue Velvet. A young man sticks his prodigious chin where it does not belong and finds his balls in the grip of a psychopath *The Frida Cinema thefridacinema.org Fri., 2:30, 5:30 & 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

***The Tempest* on Film: Empire and Its Ruins, Winter 2019.** Julie Taymor's 21st-century feminist version stars Helen Mirren as Prospera. *UCI Humanities Instructional Building, Room 100, (949) 824-6117 Fri., 7 p.m. Free.*

Mandy. A man hunts in the Pacific Northwest wilderness for a religious sect that slaughtered the titular love of his life. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org Fri.-Sat., 8 & 11 p.m. $7-$10.*

2019 Oscar Nominated Short Films: Documentary. Program A: *Black Sheep* (U.K.), *End Game* (USA). Program B: *Lifeboat* (USA); *A Night at the Garden* (USA). *Penned: End of Sentence* (USA). *Regency South Coast Village, (714) 557-5701 Program B opens Sat., Program A opens Sun. Call theater for show times and ticket prices.*

AMC's Best Picture Showcase 2019. The Academy Award Best Picture nominees are shown *AMC Fullerton 20, (714) 992-6962; also at AMC Marina Pacifica, (562) 430-8790; AMC Tustin Legacy at the District, (714) 258-7036. Sat., 11 a.m., $30 (also Feb. 23, 11 a.m., $40 or $60 for both dates), and at AMC Orange 30 at the Outlets, (714) 769-4288. Feb. 23, 10 a.m. $65.*

Princess Mononoke. A young warrior is infected with a deadly curse that sends him looking for a cure. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org Sat., 11:30 a.m., 2:30 & 5 p.m. Sun., 2:30, 5 & 8:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

My Neighbor Totoro. Satsuki and Mei move with their father to a new home in the countryside, which is full of strange and delightful creatures. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org Sat., noon & 6 p.m., Sun., noon, 2, 4 & 6 p.m. $7-$10.*

A Star Is Born. A seasoned musician discovers and falls in love with a struggling artist. *Various theaters; www.fandango.com. Check website for show times and ticket prices.*

Black Panther. T'Challa must step forward to lead his people into a new future and, as his alter ego Black Panther, confront a challenger from his country's past. *Various theaters; www.fandango.com. Check website for show times and ticket prices.*

My Fair Lady. A pompous phonetics professor takes it upon himself to transform a Cockney working-class girl to improve her job prospects *Various theaters, www.fathomevents.com. Sun., 1 & 5 p.m. Wed., 3 & 7 p.m. $12.50.*

3-Minute Movie Night: An Evening of Short Comedy Films. The title says it all. *Atomic Wombat Comics, (949) 354-2704 Sun., 8 p.m. Free*

Do the Right Thing. A young pizza deliveryman tries to hold together himself and his mixed-race, Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn as it reaches the boiling point. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org Mon.-Tues., 2, 5 & 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Alien. It's a 40th-anniversary screening of Ridley Scott's sci-fi masterpiece. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Mon.-Tues., 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m. $7-$10*

UCI Film and Media Studies Spotlight Showcase. The event showcases recent student films *UCI's McCormick Theater, (949) 824-6117 Tues., 4 p.m. Free.*

Mobile Suit Gundam NT (Narrative). Shunichi Yoshizawa's 2018 sci-fi anime is set a year after the events shown in 2014's *Mobile Suit Gundam Unicorn 7 Various theaters; www.fathomevents.com. Tues., 7 p.m. $12.50.*

Pan's Labyrinth. Young Ofelia descends into her imagination and the mysterious labyrinth inhabited by the faun Pan *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org Wed., 2, 5:30 & 8:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Labyrinth. In this 1986 cult favorite, Sarah wishes her baby brother away, then has 13 hours to get him back from Goblin King Jareth. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org Wed.-Thurs., Feb 21, 2:30 & 5 p.m., Wed., 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Dirty Dancing. The 1987 rom-dram popularized the saying "Nobody puts Baby in a corner." *Fullerton Public Library, (714) 738-6327 Thurs., Feb. 21, 1 p.m. Free.*

Power to Heal. A public-television documentary on the historic struggle to secure equal and adequate access to health care for all Americans. *UCI School of Law, (949) 824-2483. Thurs., Feb. 21, 5:30 p.m. Free.*

***Studio 54* and Live Director Q&A.** The rise and fall of Studio 54 founders Ian Schrager and Steve Rubell, whose New York City club was the epicenter of 1970s hedonism. *Art Theatre, arttheatrelongbeach.org. Thurs., Feb 21, 7:30 p.m. $9-$12.*

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Concrete Jungle

'Neoteric: The New Avant-Garde' captures life—with lots of cement

BY DAVE BARTON

"Neoteric: The New Avant-Garde" at the Golden West College Art Gallery doesn't offer much by way of the experimental forefront, despite the artspeak repetition of its title ("neoteric," "new" and "avant-garde" are all synonyms of one another). Having said that, the gallery's new director and curator, Evan Senn, has created a memorable, even inviting exhibition that greets us warmly and asks us to linger, its modest installations gripping us in a bear hug of color and ideas.

I haven't appreciated Andre Woodward's sculptures in the past. When I first saw them, I thought his living ficus growing out of cement-block sculptures resembled cheap plastic house plants. At the very least, the ecological message was too obvious, and at its worst, Woodward was killing living things to make his point. I blame that cursory reading on poor exhibition notes and a lack of context because in my walk-through with the informed and enthusiastic Senn, I learned the cement is actually porous, soaked in water to keep the *live* plants going.

The engineering and ingenuity behind Woodward's work is indisputable, the blocks of cement and their captive plants balanced on colorfully painted steel stands, with thin wire guylines steadying them as the soft air conditioning above cause them to shiver and shake. They also work on a number of other, more expansive narratives, as a hopeful message of survival, a symbol of understanding breaking free of ignorance, even as a resurrection metaphor.

Caesar Alzate Jr.'s layered paint sculptures on canvas erupt from their white walls, with the most startling being *Object No. 18*, which looks as if a large slice of skin has been flayed with a knife and left dangling, the slick color resembling an open wound. Equally stunning, but in an altogether different way, is the texture of the aureole surrounding the fossilized volcanic lip of his canvas *Object No. 2012-04*, the center a sun-baked desert of spidery gesso and acrylic cracks.

Quinton Bemiller's five paintings, part of his eight-canvas "Vertical Landscape" series, would be a wet dream for any budding biologist, his bacilli shapes stacked on top of one another like visions of denuded forests, as friendly paramecium photobomb their tendrilled surfaces into the image. While there are no discernible ideas being shared in the work—they're just pretty pictures—there's an amiable lack of the ordinary infusing the work, its overall serenity making for great associative conversations, from the aforementioned microscopic creatures to cartoon landscapes and the monsters of Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki.

WOODWARD'S LIVING SCULPTURES SIT IN FRONT OF LAH'S INSTALLATION

COURTESY OF GWC ART GALLERY

Fabric sculptor Mimi Haddon's pagan feminist fire circle, *Topatopa: A Survival Guide*, looks more like a romper room for large children than the sober ode to the Goddess one would expect. Stuffed to the brim with glorious, overwhelming eye candy, there are shapes and colors painted on the walls, a large match suspended, waiting to be struck; a playful totem stacked to the ceiling with found and donated items, including textiles that resemble ballerinas who've abandoned their tutus en masse, as a large pile of finger-thin breasts, with shiny erect nipples, sits chaotically in a corner. I can't say I fully understand her intent, but there's a giddiness to it that's enlightening and silly at the same time.

Likewise, Olga Lah's joyous *Everything is waiting for you*, a wall-length installation inspired by a poem of the same name, is a bouquet of paper, spray paint and plastic blossoms inspired by still lifes. Senn perfectly describes them as a "monster flower mountain thing," and in a perfect world, it would inspire a legion of selfies. Inviting as they are, however, Lah subversively makes her bouquet a cautionary message, wrinkling the paper and layering in lighter colors around the edges of the blooms, suggesting that it's been a few days since they've been cut, and they're beginning to desiccate.

I've previously admired Chris Natrop's magical, hand-cut paper sculptures in these pages. Hung from the ceiling and lit with a changing series of colored lights, they create an ever-shifting box of shadows, stepping into *Candy Bowl Meltdown Redux* has the potential to be a meditative experience. The lighting around the installation here, unfortunately, is too bright, the space allotted far too compact for anyone to really make out the shapes his work creates in a darker room, let alone allow anyone above a certain height to enter without it crashing down around them.

Threadwinners (the collaborative team of Liz Flynn and Alyssa Arney) crochet elaborate food and pop-culture-tech items in two of the most showstopping pieces: *Techstile Blanket* and *Comfort Food Blanket*. Demanding interaction, the former encourages you to open the crocheted laptop and look inside, run your fingers over the yarn Tamagotchi, floppy discs and oversized boombox, creating a retro overload. The crocheted pan dulce, shrimp, hotdogs, wedding cake, popcorn, pumpkin pie and ice cream, crowded together in a food orgy, also seem ready-made for selfies, while simultaneously playing on the idea of tech and junk food creating safe places in which we can hide from the world.

"NEOTERIC: THE NEW AVANT-GARDE" at Golden West College Art Gallery, Fine Arts Building, Room 108, 15751 Gothard St., Huntington Beach, (714) 895-8318. Instagram: GWCartgallery. Open Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Through Feb. 23. Free.

ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

Feb. 15-21

NIGHT DIVE. The after-hours party includes musical performances, science demonstrations and food and drink. Fri., 7 p.m. $17.95; members, free. 18+. Aquarium of the Pacific, 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach. (562) 590-3100, aquariumofthepacific.org.

THE REVENGE OF THE BARON'S REVENGE. An homage to monster movies, this play centers on a mad scientist seeking revenge on a castle-dwelling couple. Opens Fri.; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m. Through March 9. $10-$25. Garage Theatre, 251 E. Seventh St., Long Beach. (886) 811-4111, www.thegaragetheatre.org.

BIKRAM PARTNER YOGA. Looking for a post-Valentine's Day activity? This yoga session brings couples and friends closer. Sun., 1 p.m. $39 per couple. Bikram Yoga San Clemente, 711 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente. (949) 388-9595, www.bikramsc.com.

"DREAMSCAPES". Korean-born Ann Kim presents her dreamy, colorful oil paintings. Open Mon. & Wed.-Sun., noon-5 p.m. Through March 4. Free. Sandstone Gallery, 384-A N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-6775, sandstonegallery.com.

"CONVEYANCE". Marie Thibeault's large-scale oil paintings spell out the illusion of space and the various forms and shapes that shift within it. Open Thurs., 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; Fri.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Through April 21. $8-$10; members and children younger than 12, free; free admission Thursdays after 3 p.m. Long Beach Museum of Art, 356 E. Third St., Long Beach. (562) 912-7586, lbma.org.

"GARY BREWER: THE SHAPE OF TIME—A TEN YEAR SURVEY". Complex, detailed paintings refer to the mysterious beauty of nature. Open Mon.-Thurs., 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Fri., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Through March 30. Free. Irvine Fine Arts Center at Heritage Community Park, 14321 Yale Ave., Irvine, (949) 724-6880, irvinefinearts.org.

"STARGAZERS: INTERSECTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY ART & ASTRONOMY". A group show featuring multimedia installations that depict the visual wonders of space and astronomy. Open Mon.-Thurs., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Through April 6. Free. Frank Doyle Arts Pavilion, 2701 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa. (714) 432-5738, orangecoastcollege.edu/DoyleArts.

DANCE VISIONS. UC Irvine's dance program unleashes the talents of graduate and undergraduate performers, choreographed by faculty members. Thurs., Feb. 21, 8 p.m., also Feb. 22-23. $12-$25. Irvine Barclay Theatre, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-4646, www.thebarclay.org.

For the Love of the Low End

Chance Wilder Onody's romance with the bass keeps him feeling good

BY NATE JACKSON

The greatest gift and curse of being a bass player is assuming the role of the anchor. In an orchestra, they are the thunder that's felt but rarely seen, the dense, fibrous muscle holding down the structure of the music swirling around them. It's not an instrument just anyone can choose; it has to pick you. It needs someone hearty, strong-handed, reliable, bold yet sensible, and above all a team player. Of course, none of this occurred to Chance Wilder Onody, who picked up the tall, husky wooden instrument for the first time at Corona del Mar High School. If joining the orchestra would get him out of signing up for some boring elective that included actual homework, the bass would do just fine.

Originally from Canada, Onody's family moved to OC right before he started high school. Enrolling in Corona del Mar High just before the year started, the only electives he could choose were orchestra or introduction to marine biology. He noted the description of the orchestra course included the word *strings*, which he assumed meant guitar. "I went into the music class, talked to the music director, who told me it was a common misconception, but he asked if I play cello, viola, violin or bass," Wilder says. "I said, 'I play the big one in the back,' and he looked at me and said, 'Oh, you play bass?'"

In reality, Wilder wasn't a musician at all, save for some short-lived piano lessons as a kid. However, when he got ahold of the instrument, something clicked. His knack for perfect pitch and quick learning by watching the kids next to him, plus his tall, burly build made him a natural. His size always made him stick out, but in the back of the orchestra, he fit right in. "Over time, I just fell in love with the instrument completely," he says.

Little did he know that over the next decade, this relationship would take him places he never imagined: traveling across the world, sharing the stage with '70s rock legends, achieving viral YouTube fame. The latter came as a result of performing a one-man cover of "Feeling Good," first made popular by Nina Simone and later sterilized by Michael Bublé. Onody's version was composed of a collage of orchestrated bass parts plucked and bowed on a variety of standup, electric and acoustic instruments, allowing him to show the complexity and range four strings can offer in a classical setting.

Onody stumbled onto the video idea after he'd booked a group of musicians to help him record a full-band version of "Feeling Good," with him taking the lead.

CHANCE THE BASSIST

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Unfortunately, all the musicians were hired to perform at a more lucrative gig on the same day he'd planned to record. "A week or so before the actual recording date, they all got booked on a really cool gig, so I ended up being a fish out of water, kinda stuck without anyone to help me," Onody says.

Realizing that he'd started in classical music as a principal bassist, he took it as a chance to do something he'd never done before. "There's always beautiful lines going around in the orchestra that we never get to play, so for me, I looked at it as musical acting, [as if it were] my chance to be everyone in the orchestra that I always wanted to be," Onody says. The video garnered almost 400,000 views on YouTube and led to more collage-style videos of him playing other covers and original tunes on bass.

This was only Onody's most recent success. Thriving in the orchestra, the young bassist kept up his playing throughout school, including while in the midst of signing up for football and playing on the offensive and defensive lines for Corona del Mar High. In between sports and lunch breaks, he recalls, he would sneak off to study his instrument in the music practice rooms. It was in one of those rooms that he was discovered by Albert Wu, who was visiting the school as director/conductor of the Irvine Young Concert Artists to recruit teenage players for a touring youth orchestra. Onody had been playing Vivaldi's "Winter." "[Wu] immediately offered me a position as a principal player in his orchestra. What was beautiful about his orchestra is everyone in there got an opportunity to be a soloist, refining that down to the people who were more adept at standing in front and not getting nervous," says Onody, who became one of the more standard soloists in that group.

He joined in 2008, the same year the Irvine Young Concert Artists were selected to perform at the Olympic Games in China. Onody and dozens of his elite local peers were flown to China and performed for thousands, then toured across the continent, starting in Seoul, South Korea. Footage of their trip shows the bright-eyed teenager towering over the rest of his colleagues as they took a break to enjoy sightseeing at the Great Wall of China.

Despite being a kid, the environment he was thrust into as a musician was serious business. Onody made his debut as a soloist in a concerto with the orchestra alongside the Seoul Philharmonic at 17. "I got used to playing in front of an international audience pretty quickly," Onody says. "I like being a soloist because I like to make my own rules. When it's classical music, the audience knows every note you're supposed to play, so the part you get to embellish is during the solo, and I can dictate the tempo of the piece, and that's when I really get to experience my sense of freedom."

Those early experiences have helped him to keep his cool nowadays as a studio musician, session player and sideman, working with artists such as jazz guitarist Chris Gerolmo (who is best known as the screenwriter for *Mississippi Burning*) and onetime Jethro Tull drummer Doane Perry, with whom Onody performs on many projects. He's also a regular at events such as NAMM, where he performs at booths for his sponsors, which include NS Design, Bartolini Pickups, Tsunami Cables and Phil Jones Bass.

Despite all the places the bass has taken him, Onody is always glad to return to Orange County and work on his next creation. Recently, he made a video for his original composition "The Music That Was Us," which shows him playing each part on bass and keys, alchemizing into a contemporary-classical mosaic of romantic passion. Not only is he talented, but he also bares a striking resemblance to Fabio, with his long hair and piercing gaze as he plays his instrument.

One thing that can't be denied is the amount of love Onody puts into his craft and the natural high he gets from getting creative.

"My whole mantra to myself is to push the boundaries or that there are no boundaries; approach it by having as much fun as possible," Onody says. "And whatever tune I have in my head, I want to try to re-create it in the real world."

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Scratch Valentine's Day

Ninth-annual Fuck Love Party kills Cupid with the funk

BY NATE JACKSON

Ask the members of the Funk Freaks how they feel about rare vinyl and a chance to rock a set of turntables, and they'll all admit to spending way more time and money than they should in the name of love. The passion that grew out of this OC record collective and DJ crew is now a worldwide syndicate of vinyl-heads with hearts in their eyes when it comes to the funk. But on the week of Valentine's Day, the only love they wanna talk about is the kind that gets asses on the dance floor. Everything else—flowers, chocolates and candlelight dinners—is all bullshit.

"There's this song by Psycho Realm called 'Love From the Sick Side,' and there's a famous line in there, the first thing Duke says, 'Fuck love! I can't get enough of yo freaky ass, baby!'" sings Funk Freaks co-founder Ivan Marquez, a.k.a. Debo, leaning back in his chair behind a desk in the backroom of the Funk Freaks Record shop in Santa Ana. "It's a dope track. I grew up listening to, and I came up with that mentality—fuck love. At the end of the day, you're just playing games with each other and shit."

Since 2009, the joy of shitting on Hallmark's sappiest holiday continues to inspire the Funk Freaks' annual Fuck Love Anti-Love Funk Party at Original Mike's. As always, the electronic slap and zap of '80s boogie funk will be the soundtrack to hours of two-stepping, grinding and probably some subsequent baby-making. "It's almost like a bird calling to all single people," Debo says, "Everyone's out trying to get laid, not that they necessarily will, but our mentality was 'Come party with us, whether you're single or taken.'"

The party at Original Mike's usually starts well before the DJs even load their equipment onto the stage. Lovers looking to make a night of it crowd into the bright-red restaurant booths or at the bar early in the evening to get fed and boozed-up before the party begins. Some just show up to see the legendary performers that the DJ collective have excavated out of retirement.

For one of their early Fuck Love shows, Funk Freaks brought Niteflyte legend Howard Johnson out of retirement for his first show in more than a decade. Previous Fuck Love headliners include Prince Charles and the City Beat Band and Carol Shinnette. This year they'll be bringing it back to where it all began for Fuck Love by featuring Sick Jacken from Psycho Realm, a member of the group wrote the lyrics that inspired Debo to get the party started.

"He's also a big vinyl collector—he collects a lot of soul, everything from doo-wop to funk and all that," Debo says, noting he and Jacken have worked together on a DJ party of their own called the Originators, paying homage to renowned vinyl collectors who come to the party to guest DJ for the young cats they've unwittingly influenced.

Though the DJs playing records at Fuck Love aren't exactly romantics, they have a bond that can't be broken when it comes to the funk. Currently, the crew's 10 original members—spread out between OC, Riverside and Bakersfield—are all still active, some more than others, but always reliable to drop in and show support. Once in a while, a representative from one of their many chapters in Europe will come through and spin.

But no matter who comes through, Debo says, part of deejaying for the love means giving their comrades the freedom to play what they want as long as it gets the crowd bumping and grinding.

"We never give people a set playlist for our guest DJs," Debo says. "We give them an open forum to play what they want, but we don't really get all lovey-dovey."

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with Sick Jacken at Original Mike's, 100 S. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 550-7764, www.originalmikes.com. Fri., 9 p.m. $10. 21+

MARK GHOLI

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THE GOOO FOOT MESTIZO BEAT 8 p.m.-$7. 21+ Alnx's Bar 2913 E. Anahnm St. Long Beach (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com

THE GRINNS, CARNEVALE OF THE FRIGHTS, ON ORUGS 7 p.m.-$12-$15 all ages. Garden Amp, The Locker Room 12762 Main St. Garden Grove. (949) 415-8544 gardenamp.com

KABAKA PYRAMIO 8 p.m., $15, all ages Garden Amp, The Locker Room, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544 gardenamp.com

THE PUSCIE JONES REVUE, SPLIT PARTY 8 p.m.-$8, 21+ The Wayfarer 843 W. 19th St. Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039 www.wayfarercm.com.

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UNWRITTEN LAW, AUDIO KARATE 8 p.m., $25, all ages. The Observatory 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (714) 957-0600 www.observatoryoc.com.

VUNOABAR, THE REO PEARS 8 p.m., $15, 21+ Marty's On Newport, 14401 Nowport Ave., Tustn (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com

Sunday

CAT SCAN SHIT GIVER, JUSTUS PROFFIT, SALT 8 p.m.-$5, 21+ Alnx's Bar 2913 E. Anahnm St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com

PEDRO THE LION; TOMBERLIN 8 p.m., $15 all ages. The Observatory 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600 www.observatoryoc.com

Y LA BAMBA 8 p.m., $13 21+ Marty's On Nowport, 14401 Nowport Ave., Tustin (714) 544-1995 www.martysonnowport.com

Monday

DAVID ROSALES AND HIS BAND OF SCOUNDRELS; MOONLIGHT GRAHAM; TIM JOHNSON 7:30 p.m. Irnn 21+. The Wayfarer 843 W. 19th St. Costa Mesa (949) 764-0039 www.wayfarercm.com.

Tuesday

NJOMZA 8 p.m. $15, all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

PLAHTASIA, THE NO 44, HUMBLERONEZ, CESHRO 8 p.m., free 21+. Marty's On Nowport, 14401 Newport Ave., Tustin (714) 544-1995 www.martysonnowport.com

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THE COATHANGERS 8 p.m., $15, 21+ Marty's On Nowport, 14401 Newport Avn., Tustin (714) 544-1995 www.martysonnowport.com.

IRIS & THE SHADE, CHRISTIAN SPENCE, JOSHUA SPEERS 8 p.m., $5 21+ The Wayfarer 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039. www.wayfarercm.com.

Thursday, Feb. 21

BODIE, ALEC RING, MOXIE 7 p.m., $5 21+ The Wayfarer 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com

CALISAMBA; ORYWALLERO 8 p.m.-$10 21+ Alex's Bar 2913 E. Anaheim St. Long Beach (562) 434-8292; www.alexsbar.com.

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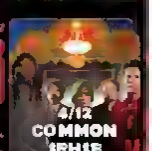
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The Doll

I am a 55-year-old heterosexual man, and I have lived with ALS for the past six years. I am either in a wheelchair or in a hospital bed, and I have very little motor ability in my limbs. Like most or all male ALS patients, I still have full sensory ability, including a fully functioning penis. Are there safe websites or groups I can connect with that deal with helping paralytics like me find people who are interested in hooking up? I'm talking about people who have a fetish for paralytics. I know that some people have a thing for amputees, I imagine there's a fetish for any number of diseases or afflictions. When I was healthy, I was into light bondage. That seems like a redundancy now, but I can still get into dress-up and role-play. I would be cool if someone was into the whole bathing, grooming, dressing thing, and whatever baby doll fantasy they might have. Hell, I'd be happy if someone just wanted to give me a pity fuck!

Realistic About Getting Dominated Or Lustfully Laid

"I struggled to find any specific online groups with respect to ALS and sexuality," said Andrew Gurza, a disability-awareness consultant and the host of *Disability After Dark*, a terrific podcast that explores and celebrates the sexual agency and desirability of people with disabilities. "But what RAGOOLL is looking for might not be directly related to his specific disability. It sounds like he is looking to engage with a community of people called 'devotees.' These individuals are attracted to people primarily because of their disabilities—and that might be what he is looking for. I know a couple who used a devotee website to find each other, who dated and eventually married."

If you're open to playing with a devotee, RAGOOLL, Gurza suggests checking out Paradevo (paradevo.net), a website for "female devotees and gay male devotees" of disabled men.

"Many disabled people have also set up profiles on sites like FetLife to explore not only their fetishistic sides, but also how their disabled identities can complement and play a role in that," said Gurza.

Now, many people, disabled and otherwise, look down on devotees—who are often accused of fetishizing disability and objectifying disabled people. But people who are exclusively attracted to the able-bodied and/or the conventionally attractive are rarely accused of fetishizing the able and ambulatory or objectifying the facially symmetrical. Which is why it has always seemed to me—and Gurza agrees with me on this point—that if being with someone who is turned on by your *whatever the-fuck* is good enough for the able-bodied, it's good enough for people with disabilities. Provided of course that, able or disabled, we're appreciated for *everything* we bring to the table or the chair or the bed.

Ryan Honick, a disability advocate and public speaker, doesn't think you should limit your search to websites aimed exclusively at the disability community.

"It's estimated that one in five people have a disability," said Honick. "And when I think about how challenging dating can be anyway—disability notwithstanding—my immediate thought is that RAGOOLL shouldn't exclude 80 percent of the population from his search. So I would encourage him to use some of the mainstream apps—like Tinder, OkCupid, Bumble or Match—and put what he's after front and center."

Honick would caution other disabled people that putting your disability front and center—even on mainstream dating apps—is likely to attract the attention of devotees.

"RAGOOLL doesn't seem like he would mind being with a devotee," said Honick. "But those of us who *do* mind need to be a little more discerning. I've inadvertently attracted a fair number of people with a devotee fetish, and it honestly squicked me out."

Zooming out for a second: Safety is always a concern when inviting a stranger over for sex, RAGOOLL, even for the non-disabled. In addition to attracting the attention of a few good and decent people, devotees or not, your relative helplessness could attract the attention of a predator. So before inviting anyone over, get their real name and their real phone number. Then share that information with a trusted friend—someone who can check in with you before and after a date—and let your potential new fuck buddy know you're sharing their info with a trusted friend.

Second-to-last word goes to Honick: "Another option, if it's available to RAGOOLL and he's open to it, would be hiring a sex worker."

And the last word goes to Gurza: "RAGOOLL shouldn't resign himself to the idea that he's a pity fuck. His desires as a disabled man have full value and worth. And I want him to know, as a fellow disabled man, that he can have a fulfilling sex life and that someone out there does find him attractive."

Follow Andrew Gurza on Twitter @AndrewGurza, and follow Ryan Honick on Twitter @RyanLHonick.

SavageLove

» DAN SAVAGE

I'm interested in mummification—being covered in layers of plastic wrap and duct tape—but I am not interested in sexual activity. I created an account on what I have been told is the most popular hookup app for kinky gay men. I am not interested in sex with any gender. How can I determine if someone who agrees to mummify me can be trusted not to initiate sexual activity?

Wannabe Rare Aspie Perv

I assume the app you're using is Recon, WRAP, as it's the most popular hookup app for kinky gay and bi men. There are "FRIENDS" listings in the lower right-hand corner of each profile. Contact the friends of anyone you're interested in playing with and ask for a reference. Is this guy skilled...can he be trusted...does he respect limits...etc. If the answers are yes, yes and yes, you can most likely trust him.

I'm a 44-year-old woman living in the D.C. area. I divorced my husband last year, and I haven't had sex in seven years. Despite my premenopausal age and daily antidepressant, I'm horny as fuck. How do you recommend I find someone to do me? I am a BBW and ready to get fucked. But I also want to protect my privacy, and I'm reluctant to post pics online. I'm aware I am a fetish for some, and I've been something of a "crazy-person magnet" in the past, and that's a concern. I'm not looking for love. I just want to get done without meeting a psycho.

Like A Virgin Again

You can't find someone if you aren't willing to put yourself out there. LAVA, which these days means putting some pics up on dating apps. There are lots of dating and/or hookup apps and websites for bigger folks, some more fetishizing than others. (I did a little digging, and WooPlus.com seems to be legit and not overrun with feeders.) And who cares if someone spots your photo on a dating site? If Jeff Bezos refuses to be shamed by his dick pics—or blackmailed with them—you don't have to be ashamed to show your face on a dating or hookup app. As for avoiding "psychos," LAVA, there are shitty, toxic people everywhere. Learn to recognize the signs and take those red flags seriously. If you have a terrible track record—if you've found yourself with (or married to) a lot of shitty/toxic people—then you need to make sure you're not the problem. Because if everyone you've ever dated was shitty or toxic, LAVA, there's a better than even chance you were the shitty or toxic common denominator in a lot of failed relationships. Do the work—ask being introspective and self-critical—and if you're not the problem and you are incapable of spotting red flags, confide in a friend whose judgment you trust when you're scrutinizing potential FWBs.

On the Lovecast (savagelovecast.com), Dan chats with Eric Leue from the Free Speech Coalition. Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.

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Toke of the Week

» JEFFERSON VANBILLIARD

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Americans really like convenience. Drive-thrus, to-go food, and sweatpants that resemble jeans can be found in every strip mall built after the 1950s—and it doesn't look as if any of it is going away any time soon. That's why it doesn't surprise me that concentrates account for more than half of all cannabis sales in California. It's easy, quick and gets you baked in about a third of the time it takes to roll a proper joint.

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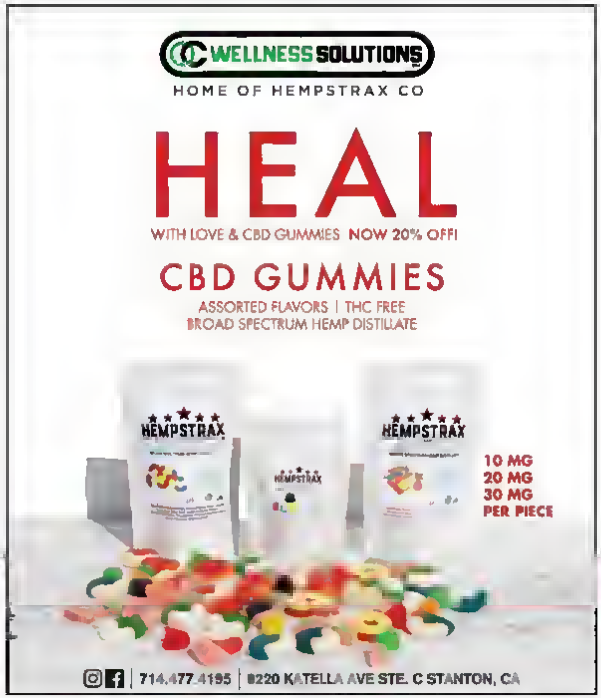

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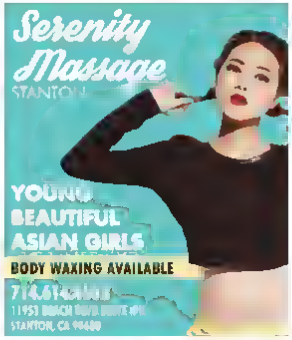
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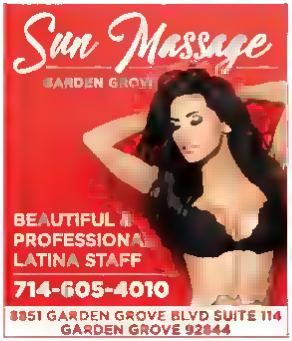
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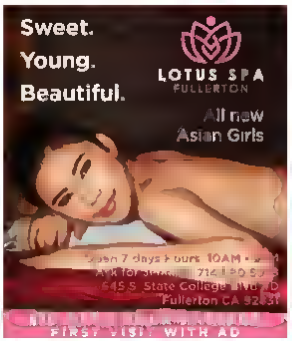
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Casting the First Stone

Me, Hitler and Virginia's Ralph Northam

BY JIM WASHBURN

If you lived in the Highland Greens condo tract in Buena Park in 1967 and answered your door on Halloween night to the pasty-white sight of the Pillsbury Dough Boy and Adolf Hitler holding out their candy bags, that was my friend Dave and me.

For some now-unremembered sin, my stepdad wasn't going to let me go trick-or-treating that night. When he relented at dusk, I didn't have a costume. So I dabbed on the signature paintbrush mustache, Hitler-combed my hair, and out we went.

I later learned this wasn't the right thing to do—actually later that night. Most folks thought the madman/muffin team-up was cute or funny, but the few who didn't—mainly folks with European accents—let me know in no uncertain terms that my outfit was shameful. At one house, an elderly couple willed themselves to see someone else: "Oh, look, it's little Charlie Chaplin!" You can bet I walked away doing the Little Tramp's shuffle.

I learned from that, but not so much that a few years later it wasn't me in a high school yearbook photo—which the editor sagely refused to run—of the school's Political Science Club, posing with a couple of guys sporting a Klan outfit and a platter-lipped African tribesman mask. You will not see me running for president any time soon.

The photo isn't that different from the one that may cost Virginia's Governor Moonwalk his job.

What the hell were we thinking?

I'll tell you what: I can't attest to the Virginian's mindset, but back then, my friends and I thought we were *winning*, that the tide had turned and racists and their racist stereotypes were headed to the trash heap of history and deserved to be mocked and lampooned on the way down, as was the American custom.

America had mocked the Nazis, even as World War II was still raging in Disney and Warner Bros. cartoons, in Bill Mauldin's Pulitzer-winning comics in *Stars and Stripes*, and in the Spike Jones hit record "Der Fuehrer's Face." By the time my friends and I were in our teens, Nazis were downright hilarious in *Hogan's Heroes*, *The Producers*, *Laugh-In* and elsewhere.

When we were in grade school, we'd seen blacks being beaten by Southern cops on the news, and we had wept when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. But we'd since seen Sidney Poitier slap a white man silly in *In the Heat of the Night* and TV's first interracial kiss on *Star Trek*; rock was being reclaimed and revolutionized by Jimi Hendrix, and Richard Pryor was reinventing comedy. Black Power was becoming more than just a phrase, and the arc of history was arcing in the right direction.

What the hell did we know? Corona del Mar High School had one black student, and we didn't bus him in—we *jetted* him over, an exchange student from Africa. From our white-assed vantage, it looked as if the wheel had turned, and none of us imagined that a half-century later cops would still be shooting kids of color dead in the streets and we'd have some orange turd in the White House defending tiki-torch-carrying Nazis as "very good people."

I bring up this little history lesson because the point of lessons is to *learn* from them, which is what the human brain is hard-wired to do, as well as why we're not all still living in caves hurling our poop at one another. Unless you're information averse like that ochre ogre in the Oval Office, the advantage of having done and said stupid shit is you'd learn from it and try to be a better person.

Consider the late Senator Robert Byrd from West Virginia. Unlike current Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, Byrd didn't briefly pose in or adjacent to a Klan outfit on a lark; Byrd *was* a Klansman, the *Exalted Cyclops* even of his local group. During WWII he insisted he would not serve in an integrated military, writing (thanks, Wikipedia), "I shall never fight in the armed forces with a negro by my side. … Rather I should die a thousand times, and see Old Glory trampled in the dirt never to rise again, than to see this beloved land of ours become degraded by race mongrels, a throwback to the blackest specimen from the wilds."

Well, screw that guy, right? Except Byrd learned and changed. It took him awhile—he opposed the Civil Rights Act in 1964—but the wheel in his head turned. He later renounced his racism, supported civil rights, voted to create Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and, nearing the end of his tenure as America's longest-serving senator, proudly endorsed Barack Obama for president.

When Obama sang "Amazing Grace" as a balm at a memorial for the victims of the racist mass shooting at a Charleston church in 2015, he was voicing the words of John Newton, a 1700s British slave-ship captain who later became an ardent abolitionist, influential in Britain outlawing the slave trade a half-century before the U.S followed suit.

One of my favorite David Mamet lines was in his *The Unit* TV series. A Special Forces team leader is hesitant to work with a CIA officer who had failed him before. He's asked, "So you don't think people can change for the better?" and he responds, "Nope. I've seen it, though."

Such changing grace can be seen in lots of places, particularly if you look within yourself. If you don't think you've screwed up and hurt and offended others in your life, you probably haven't been paying attention. But if you have, you've likely learned and grown from it.

NOT AN ACTUAL HITLER

COURTESY JIM WASHBURN

Which is why it would take considerable convincing for me to think that Northam needs to resign his office because of a thin layer of ink on a 35-year-old sheet of paper maybe depicting him with a thin covering of cloth or shoe polish over his face.

It's one thing if that photo were emblematic of the person he is today; the way, for example, that Donald Trump having discriminated against black renters decades ago is consonant with the unrepentantly racist mushroom dick he remains today.

But Northam has a solid civil-rights record in his state and has supported the Affordable Care Act, criminal-justice reform and other actions that favor working and poor people of all colors. According to a poll conducted in his state by the *Washington Post*, 58 percent of African-Americans in Virginia want him to stay in office. Everyone's entitled to an opinion, but theirs should maybe matter more than yours or mine.

Unless you have an inexhaustible supply of rage, you've got to choose your battles. Maybe Northam's supporters are less concerned about his dusty old photo than they are about the current actions of the Republican Party that unearthed that photo, the party that has been actively working to disenfranchise voters of color or to negate their votes through gerrymandering.

Maybe Northam's "appearance of racial insensitivity" is of less concern to them—as it should be to you and I—than the daily racist, xenophobic, corrosive spewings of our Commander in Chief or his attempts to shred our social fabric and pit working people against one another while his wealthy, largely white club members vacuum up the nation's money.

If I ever run for president, or—in these politicized times—even for a local vector-control district post, you can be sure some political opposition group will dig up the high school photo of me (I'm the one in the Dagwood Bumstead mask), so I'd like to apologize in advance: Gosh, I'm sorry I won't do it again.

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